

H. M. KING HUSSEIN

ADDRESS

to

THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

WASHINGTON D. C

DECEMBER 10, 1970

Ministry of Culture and Information

Amman - Jordan - 1970

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KING HUSSEIN'S SPEECH BEFORE

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"This is the fourth time that I have had the privilege of being invited to speak to you; and I am no less grateful, and no less in awe of you than I was the first time I appeared before you in 1959. As members of this organization, you have a responsibility far exceeding that of any other group in the United States, to keep the people of this country fully, frankly, and accurately informed. Therefore, it behooves me in speaking to you today, to help you, in whatever measure I can, to fulfill your task and your responsibility in reporting and interpreting the problems of the Middle East.

What I say today will, in a sense, be no different from what I have said before. The basic problems between Arab and Israeli are the same: and the basic solutions are the same. The only thing that has changed in my opinion, is the greater sense of urgency that hangs in the air, bringing with it a promise of disaster if immediate steps are not taken.

If there is one thing I can succeed in leaving behind with you, it is this. At no time has there been a better opportunity to set in motion the machinery that will lead to peace ; but at no time also, has there been a greater likelihood of a continuing conflict that will eventually lead to war.

What disturbs me particularly is that today too much is being said about the short-term crises — missile sites, phantom deliveries and cease - fire violations — that the public you keep informed has possibly forgotten what the real conflict is between Arab and Israeli. If you want to remind them, you could not do worse than to quote General Dayan, who put it this way :

“They (the Arabs) take us to be foreigners, invaders that took an Arab country and turned it into a Jewish State. And they are right ... we did it. We didn’t come here to contribute, or for a contribution to the Arab countries. We came here to establish a state.”

The country they invaded was Palestine,

and the people they displaced were the Palestinian people ; and I am here today to ask you to re-examine your own assessment of the Palestine cause, and of the continued occupation of Arab territory that followed as the result of the '67 war with the Israelis. And I would ask you as far and frank reporters to remind the American people that unless all occupied territories are returned to their rightful owners, there can never be peace in the Middle East. And in bringing these things about, no voice is more important, no influence is greater than that of the United States.

Over the years there have been many attempts to find solutions to the problems of the Middle East. None so far has been successful. In such situations, there are three alternatives. The easiest and by far the most dangerous is the policy of procrastination of drifting from one danger to another. This eventually winds up in the second alternative, direct confrontation. We have experienced this many times. And we know that it solves nothing. The third alternative is the one that holds the best hope for eventual peace, negotiating under the auspices of an outside mediator. We have committed ourselves to outside mediation with the conviction that the

world will realize that what it is seeking — peace in the Middle East — will finally be dependent on the restoration of the rights of the Palestinians and the withdrawal of the Israeli forces from all Arab territory that they are currently occupying.

The recent violence in my country was to a certain extent rooted in the frustration, bitterness, and anger which has been growing in intensity since the '67 war. For the Palestinians, lack of progress toward a solution, and the continued occupation of our land by the Israelis, stoked the fires of their unrest, and made them an easy prey for the extremist and reckless elements among them, and led to mob-like violence.

This was the saddest personal happening of my life, and the saddest event in the history of Jordan. I am sure all of you have read the stories coming out of Amman, and perhaps some of you have written them. Well, you know by now, that sad as the fighting was between the fedayeen and the government troops, the physical facts of the ten day conflict were far less serious than the first reports published abroad indicated. But the

fact that there were any casualties at all was in itself a tragedy.

Just as the first reports of ten or twenty-thousand casualties were not only gross exaggeration but pure fabrication invented for propaganda purposes, so too, the incredible stories of the city of Amman going up in flames. Reporters who have returned to Amman since the days of conflict have done much to repair the damage that was done by those first false reports. And if you were to visit Amman today, you would see the solid evidence of our return to a normal life.

It is my belief that the Palestinians, who have lived as loyal citizens of the state that has been their own since their flight from their homelands in 1948, will continue to live with their brothers in Jordan as members of one family. We have lived together as a hard working progressive nation for more than twenty years; and we were on the verge of becoming a fully self-sustaining nation when war struck in 1967. God grant that we will be so soon again. However, when we have regained all our lost lands, when the final settlement is made, the Palestinians will have the right to decide their own political future. This is a pledge that I have made many times

before, and I make it again today, and I do so in the belief that East and West Banks will be joined together again in a forward looking, modern, self-reliant state.

But now back to the central issue.

Some time ago, the American Secretary of State, said very rightly that the time had come to stop shooting and start talking. But now the time has come to stop talking and start moving. And I move, without further talk, the immediate implementation of the Security Council Resolution of November 1967.

This is a far greater document than it has been allowed to become. If its language is diplomatically polite, its meaning — its real meaning — is abundantly clear. No one made this plainer than the British Foreign Minister, Sir Alec Douglas Home in his recent speech. What added weight to his spelling out the significance of the Resolution, which laid particular stress on the necessity for Israeli withdrawal from the Arab territory that it now holds, was the fact that it was the British themselves who drafted the resolution.

The Resolution is very specific about what the Arabs must do ; it is very specific about

what the Israelis must do. And one thing that the world must do is to see to it that its provisions are immediately realized.

In deciding on a time-table for implementation, it is important to remember that all the situations which the resolution seeks to correct, all the wrongs which the resolution seeks to right, are the result of the violation of a basic principle of the United Nations Charter. This is the "inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war." In other words, no country may continue to occupy territory gained by war. This statement is a preamble to the resolution, and its continued violation is the stumbling block that stands in the way of all other steps on the road to peace.

After stating this basic principle, the resolution then charges the violaters. To Israel it says: "you must withdraw your armed forces from territory occupied in the recent conflict." There can be no equivocation about that, no confusion about its intent. It does not say except Sharm Al Shayk, except the Golan Heights, except Arab Jerusalem. It says: You must withdraw from the territory you occupied in the '67 war.

To this the Israelis have said No.

Then to the Arabs it is equally specific. It says: you must recognize Israel's right to exist, you must recognize her sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence, and you must permit her to live within secure and recognized borders.

To this we have said Yes.

It says further to Egypt: You must allow ships of all nations to pass through the Suez Canal and the Straights of Tiran.

To this Egypt said Yes.

Then to all the world including Israel and the Arab world, it says: You must find a just solution for the Palestinian people.

To this the Arabs are definitely pledged; the Israelis at best have remained silent, and might be said to have refused.

This is where the United Nations Resolution stands today, and it is my major mission here today to say that unless the talking about them stops and implementations begin, the consequences are certain to be calamitous.

In an effort to get things moving toward making the United Nations resolution work, your Secretary of State, Mr. Rogers, proposed what has become known as the "The American Initiative." One of its chief proposals was the 90-day cease-fire agreement which was intended to create conditions under which the United Nations mediator, Gunnar Jarring, might begin consultations with both sides. The Rogers plan was accepted by both the United Arab Republic and Jordan. We welcomed it for what it was — an earnest (more) attempt to bring about talks under Dr. Jarring that would eventually lead to a peaceful settlement. The Israelis, accepted the cease-fire for purposes of their own, but flatly refused to meet Dr. Jarring. This reveals what Israel's intention has always been toward the UN resolution itself — complete rejection.

Under such circumstances, how can we continue to extend the cease-fire indefinitely. In a speech about ten days ago, the President of the United Arab Republic said that unless some progress toward implementation of the November resolution was made by Israel before the end of the cease-fire on February fifth, he could not commit his country to another extension. This is a view that Jordan shares.

If no move is made by Israel soon, a continuation of the cease-fire to create a background for a peaceful settlement would be pointless.

Naturally, the beginning of the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Arab territory would be the most significant move that Israel could make. For in conquering and continuing to occupy Arab territory, Israel, in a very real sense, has hijacked and is holding for ransom Arab Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula, and the Golan Heights. I am sure that world opinion supports us in our demand that Israel should begin releasing these hostage territories.

In not agreeing to an indefinite extension to the cease-fire, President Sadat wanted to make one point very clear. The U.A.R. fears, and all Arabs fear, that Israel is pursuing the same tactics today that she pursued in 1948. Then, and for twenty-two years, she refused to abide by the United Nations Resolutions regarding the problem of Palestine; and now she is refusing to abide by the United Nations in continuing to occupy territory acquired by the war of 1967.

In my judgment, the reasons for both

actions are the same ; in 1948, she acquired through conquest, 30 percent more land than the partition plan gave her, and she annexed that territory. In 1967 vast new territories in three Arab countries, and she is still occupying them. Israel has always been a master of the fait - accompli. And if she is not made to withdraw from Arab Jerusalem, the West Bank, Sinai, the Gaza Strip, and the Golan Heights, she will continue to occupy them as long as the world will let her. Obviously, none of the many Israeli spokesmen would acknowledge such an aim, but their actions speak clearer, if not louder, than their words.

In voicing its support from an indefinite cease - fire, Israel possibly hopes to persuade the world that this is voicing its support for peace. The opposite is true, the purpose of the cease - fire was to create conditions that would lead to the implementation of the November resolution and the renewal of talks under the auspices of Dr. Jarring, The Arabs have said over and over again that they accepted the resolution, and were prepared to resume talks with Dr. Jarring.

The Israelis, on the other hand, have imposed one stalling condition after another, and

meanwhile have been consolidating their hold on the territory they occupy. Continuing a cease-fire without progress toward peace is nothing more than giving the Israelis a free hand to perpetuate the occupation of Arab territory, ultimately leading to annexation. This has long been Israel's subtle expansionist policy; and she will continue to pursue it as long as she can get away with it. The Arabs will never tolerate the continued occupation and annexation of Arab territory. As I have said before — Israel may choose land or peace — she cannot have both.

And what does this mean to the United States and the world at large. An expanded Israel, with no genuine desire to make peace on her own terms, constitutes a continued threat to world peace. There can be no relaxation of tension between the Arab states and Israel so long as she occupies a single strip of Arab Land. Tension leads to escalation, and escalation leads to confrontation, not only between the states in the area, but possibly between the world's two great powers as well. This is a very real and present danger - and one that Israel's continued occupation of Arab lands would be responsible for.

Moreover, Israel's failure to move toward

a peaceful settlement lends strong encouragement to the radical elements in the Middle East. An unsettled area is an area ripe for exploitation. And so long as Israel keeps the Middle East off balance, so long will the threat of extremism exist.

The world has learned that an unstable area anywhere is a danger to peace everywhere. And a stable Middle East would be of immeasurable value to bring peace to the world. These are the dangers that arise from Israel's continued occupation of Arab lands. The answer to them is not war, but the implementation of the November Resolution to establish a just and lasting peace. However, time is running short, and before it runs out altogether, Israel must be made to move.

I cannot close without a final word about the continued warmth and cordiality of the relationship between our two countries — Jordan and the United States. It is based, I think on your side, on a genuine understanding of the problems that confront Jordan, and of your appreciation of the efforts we have made over the years to overcome them. To those efforts you have been a generous contributor, and we will continue to count on your support.

On Jordan's side, we take great pride in our relationship with the United States of America, and we identify with your continued concern for the preservation of freedom among nations throughout the world. We express our concern by endeavoring to be a moderating influence in our part of the world, a voice of reason and responsibility where violence has too often prevailed in the past.

I think you will become aware, as time passes, that the true aim of the Arab world is indeed to live in peace, and we look to the United States and the world to help us bring it about. In the name of the people of Jordan, may I express through you to the people of this great country, our thanks for your help in the past and a desire for the continued strength of our relationship in the future.

